

With respect to independent claims 1, 25, 27, 32 and 37, Applicant respectfully submits that Numata and Katayama, either alone, or in a permissible combination, fail to disclose a counting unit and a comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 25, 27, 32 and 37.

The Office Action alleges the up-counter 201 and the comparator 203 of Numata correspond to the counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 25, 27, 32 and 37<sup>1</sup>. Applicant respectfully disagrees with these assertions.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Numata merely describes an image recording apparatus with a configuration to "reduce the number of ink-ejecting openings such that the mutual relationship of the recording at each step may be adjusted," (see Numata, col. 18, lines 4-9).

Particularly, Numata teaches that the up-counter 201 counts up a pixel clock and that a register 202 has a printing dot position correcting value for the printing dot position, which is set by a CPU 206 (see Numata, col. 18, lines 26-31). Additionally, Numata teaches that the comparator 203 merely compares a counted value in the up-counter 201 and the correcting value of the printing dot position correcting value set in the register 202. That is, Numata fails to teach or even suggest that the up-counter 201 counts or is even capable of counting the number of ejected ink droplets to a predetermined area, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 25, 27, 32 and 37. Moreover, Numata fails to

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<sup>1</sup> The Office Action does not specifically identify what is alleged to correspond to the claimed counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 25, 27, 32 and 37. However, Applicant interprets the Office Action as intending to allege that the up-counter 201 and comparator 203 of Numata correspond to the counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 25, 27, 32 and 37, based on the excerpts of Numata cited in the rejection, and traverses the rejection accordingly.

teach or even suggest a comparison unit configured to compare the number of ejected ink droplets with a predetermined value, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in claims 25, 27, 32 and 37. Additionally, it is respectfully submitted that Katayama fails to remedy at least the above-described deficiencies of Numata.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 25, 27, 32 and 37 are patentable over Numata and Katayama. Further, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-5, 12, 26, 28, 31 and 33 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claims 1, 25, 27 and 32, from which they variously depend, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 6, 13, 24, 30 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,307,981 to Kamei et al. (hereinafter "Kamei"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to claims 6 and 13, this rejection is premised upon the presumption that Numata and Katayama disclose all of the features of independent claim 1, from which claims 6 and 13 depend. As discussed above, Numata and Katayama do not disclose all of the features of independent claim 1. Further, Kamei does not remedy the deficiencies of Numata and Katayama. Thus, claims 6 and 13 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite.

With respect to independent claims 24, 30 and 36, Applicant respectfully submits that Numata, Katayama and Kamei, alone or in a permissible combination, fail to disclose a counting unit and a comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 24, and as similarly recited in independent claims 30 and 36.

Particularly, the Office Action alleges the up-counter 201 and the comparator 203 of Numata correspond to the counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim

24, and as similarly recited in independent claims 30 and 36<sup>2</sup>. Applicant respectively disagrees with these assertions.

Applicant respectively submits that the Numata merely describes an image recording apparatus with a configuration to "reduce the number of ink-ejecting openings such that the mutual relationship of the recording at each step may be adjusted," (see Numata, col. 18, lines 4-9).

Particularly, and as discussed above with respect to independent claims 1, 25, 27, 32 and 37, Numata teaches that the up-counter 201 counts up a pixel clock and that the register 202 has a printing dot position correcting value for the printing dot position which is set by a CPU 206 (see, Numata, col. 18, lines 26-31). Additionally, Numata teaches that the comparator 203 merely compares a counted value in the up-counter 201 and the correcting value of the printing dot position correcting value set in the register 202. That is, Numata fails to teach or even suggest that the up-counter 201 counts or is even capable of counting the number of ejected ink droplets to a predetermined area, as recited in independent claim 24, and as similarly recited in independent claims 30 and 36. Moreover, Numata fails to teach or even suggest a comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 24, and as similarly recited in claims 30 and 36. Furthermore, Katayama and Kamei both fail to remedy at least the above-described deficiencies of Numata.

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<sup>2</sup> The Office Action does not specifically identify what is alleged to correspond to the claimed counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 24, and as similarly recited in independent claims 30 and 36. However, Applicant interprets the Office Action as intending to allege that the up-counter 201 and comparator 203 of Numata correspond to the counting unit and comparison unit, as recited in independent claim 24, and as similarly recited in independent claims 30 and 36, based on the excerpts of Numata cited in the rejection, and traverses the rejection accordingly.

Therefore, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 24, 30 and 36 are patentable over Numata. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Numata in view of Katayama, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0038870 to Shimada; claims 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama and Shimada, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0145640 to Anderson et al. (hereinafter "Anderson"); claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama and Shimada, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0019345 to Endo; claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,853,948 to Jewell; and claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0160852 to Pickup. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

These rejections are premised upon the presumption that Numata and Katayama disclose all of the features of independent claim 1, from which claims 7-10, 22 and 23 depend. As discussed above, Numata and Katayama do not disclose all of the features of independent claim 1. Further, Shimada, Anderson, Endo, Jewell and Pickup, all fail to remedy the deficiencies of Numata and Katayama. Thus, claims 7-10, 22 and 23 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 14 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Numata in view of Katayama and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,742,301 to Ikeda. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is premised upon the presumption that Numata and Katayama disclose all of the features of independent claims 1 and 27, from which claims 14 and 29 respectively depend. As discussed above, Numata and Katayama do not disclose all of the features of independent claims 1 and 27. Thus, claims 14 and 29 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claims 1 and 27, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

Randi B. Isaacs  
Registration No. 56,046

JAO:LXF/gml

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**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 19928**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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